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## THE ACADEMIC IDEAL OF EDUCATION IN ITS LARGER RELATIONS TO LIFE

The urgent competitive spirit of our times has swept everything before it in the commercial world and is now seeking for larger conquests in the realm of higher education. Until recent years the almost universal theory of education in all the universities and colleges of America and Europe has been what I shall call "The Academic." The aim of this theory, "the academic," is to enlarge one's intellectual capacities and interests, to give fullness and richness to life, catholicity to vision, and supremely to educe and chasten that subtle and evasive mystery which we name personality. The important factors in this theory of education are the great literatures of the world, languages, ancient and modern — especially the two ancient languages, Greek the language of fluidity and perfection of form, and Latin the language of power and compression — discursive history, philosophy and pure mathematics.

This conception of education has held exclusive supremacy in the scholastic institutions of the world through all the sweep of academic history, and if conceptions, so far as their operableness and adequacy to great issues are concerned, are to be measured and estimated by their fruits, then beyond question this ideal has been amply vindicated by the civilization it has accomplished. It is a civilization illustrious among the civilizations of history, for its large diffusion of light, its wide extension of the forces of liberty and democracy, its mastery of the energies and laws of the outer world, its exquisite poetic sensitiveness to the spirit of nature; for its growing objectivity of life and consciousness, and, above all, for the magisterial men of thought and action it has given to the world.

Over against this large free ideal of learning which has for centuries done such noble service in building up man into an ever increasing fullness and symmetry of life, we find placed, in these latter days, a new ideal, the ideal of utility — an ideal, by the way, altogether hypothetical as to its power of accomplishment, for it has not yet been sufficiently subjected to the criti-

cal and discriminating touch of time. Our very practical age wants immediacy of results in learning as in commerce. It desiderates not so much culture of the whole man, not so much compass of vision and refinement of manners, as a certain pertinency and expertness of intellect that shall be convertible as swiftly as possible into professional or commercial efficiency. Its sovereign aim is not to produce a man, notable for the comprehension and exactness of his thought, the chastity and delicacy of his tastes, the poise and serenity of his temper, the grace and the chivalry of his canons of conduct; its sovereign aim rather is to produce an efficient industrial unit, a unit that has the largest money earning power, as the president of a modern university, an historian, a linguist, a doctor, a lawyer or a civil engineer. Hence the necessity of a change in educational methods, hence the emphasis upon the modern rather than upon the ancient languages, upon German that pays rather than upon Greek that chastens, hence the accent upon the practical sciences, hence the stress upon a curriculum that consummates itself in the "narrow and limited expert," rather than upon a curriculum that consummates itself in the culture of the whole man, in dignity, power, impressiveness and a beauty of personality.

As one estimating from an outside point of view with a dispassionate and detached mind, the relative values of these competing ideals of higher learning, I desire to give some reasons for the faith that is in me, the faith that for richness and permanency of results the academic ideal with its antique notes of proportion, universality and grace is vastly the superior of the "ideal of utility" with its modern notes of expertness, excessive specialization and immediate economic efficiency.

The old style of education, brings the mind, through the Greek and Latin languages, into a discursive view of two great peoples, distinguished among all the peoples of antiquity by their wealth and fertility of thought and their power of achievement, two peoples immensely rich in literatures at once varied, informative and elevating. It brings the mind also into subjection by the austere, disciplinary educational instrumentalities of logic, metaphysics and pure mathematics. This old style, the academic ideal of education, is the one most certain way to intellectual

power and beauty, to power of intellect subdued and humanized by sensitiveness to the beautiful, to beauty of intellect, commanding and alluring because it is instinct with energy. The element of intellectual power is the natural equation of the discipline in the study of mathematics, logic and metaphysics and the element of intellectual beauty is the natural equation of contact with the great spirits of antiquity, with Ovid, Vergil, Cicero, Horace and Seneca, with Plato, Aristotle, Herodotus, Homer and Theocritus, the monarchs of the world of mind who have taught all succeeding ages not only how to think, but how to utter thought in great masses of wisdom or in lightest particles of epigram and yet always with perfect loveliness of form.

Now, of course, in any estimate of competing educational methods we must make allowance for the margin of the abnormal, for the personal equation in the matter of intellect, as we do in other matters. Intellectual genius both in the sphere of thought and of its expression is now and then wholly independent of all scholastic methods and is explicable only on the assumption of a divine caprice. This is certainly the case with such transcendent forces in the world of letters as Shakespeare, Bunyan, Boehme and Whitman. These planetary minds self-tutored and self-formed are glorious accidents. But, after making due allowance for these rare exceptions, it may be justly affirmed as a general fact that the men who have made history, who have swayed nations by their eloquence, who have determined by their political prescience and by the mandatoriness of their wills the destinies of nations, who have made ages memorable for their intellectual fecundity and literary splendor, who have written the books, evolved the philosophies, formulated the laws, and sung the epics, odes and lyrics that constitute the glory of every great nation's heritage are largely the product of the academic ideal of education. "The men of light and leading" in the political, professional and literary world of the United Kingdom are almost as a body the output of Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh and Dublin. All of these institutions are inspired by the academic ideal in its primitive purity and all of them are alien in tradition and temper to the theory of utility in the higher education. Out of the great universities in successive ages have

emerged men who have attained celebrity in all departments of the intellectual life, scientists who have revolutionized their various specialties, geology, physics, chemistry, philology and biology; classicists who have attained world distinction, metaphysicians of eminence and essayists at whose feet we all gladly sit that we may learn to speak and write our mother tongue with force of diction and felicity of phrase. William Pitt, Sir Robert Peel, Edmund Burke, Charles James Fox, Lord Salisbury and Gladstone, among orators and statesmen; Jeremy Taylor, Frederick Robertson, Canon Liddon, Pusey, Maurice and Kingsley, among divines; Hume, Gibbon, Grote, Macaulay, Froude, Lecky, among historians; Addison, Swift, Julius Hare, John Morley, Matthew Arnold, Benjamin Jowett, and Walter Pater, among men of letters — these are all men of the old style of education, men who were nourished in their youth and early manhood on the graces of the classics, on the literary traditions of the past, on the austerities of logic and mathematics. These men, and a host of others that might be mentioned, have spoken or written themselves into immortality. They have given to the world orations powerful in logic and stately in construction, they have given to the world works of imagination or criticism, essays, philosophical dissertations, and poems of great power and imperishable loveliness. And what is true of the United Kingdom is likewise, though less conspicuously, true, of our own land. I say less conspicuously true for the physical has so obtruded itself in our national consciousness, it has been so dominant in our notions of well-being, so monopolizing in its demands upon our talents, that the achievements of the mind and the nobler elements of personal force do not stand out so clearly in our biographical literature as they do in the biographical literature of the United Kingdom. Yet even here I think it may be said with perfect justice to the fact, that all that is most admirable in our national life, whether we regard the accomplishment of statesmanship or the accomplishment of letters, bears upon it the mark of the old style, the impress on its utterance and manner of the classical habit of thought. Indeed I am not aware of a single exponent of the theory of specialization and utility in

education of commanding excellence either as a thinker, as a writer or as a man.

Again it seems to me that an academic education is the only safeguard against the excessive practicality of our national temperament. Life with us as a people tends to become progressively more hard and materialistic, even if it does not tend to become more sordid. We think in the terms of matter, we measure achievement in the terms of matter, we estimate man in the terms of matter, we worship in the terms of matter. We are more and more prone to value men according to their riches, pictures according to their cost, churches according to their opulence, universities according to the largeness of their endowments. Many problems confront our great and admirable Republic, but all problems, it seems to me, fade away into littleness when compared with this problem of the ever growing disposition in this nation to test all things by the standard of money. This is our imminent menace, the source of all corruption in high finance and in politics, the animus of the class antagonisms that are to-day the peril of our democratic institutions and the stimulus of the display and ostentation that makes the name of America which should be everywhere a name of dignity and honor, almost the synonym of vulgarity.

And where are we to find relief from this hard materialism that is so steadily and so subtly debauching our national conscience and dwarfing our national stature? It is quite clear, I think, that we shall not find relief in a theory of education whose master function is to enthrone things material and whose chief aim is to make man more expert in extracting from the matter-world its potencies of economic wealth. A theory of education whose ultimate goal is man's physical well-being, whose almost exclusive mission is to make him more conscious of matter and at the same moment both more the master and the slave of matter,— this certainly is not a theory of education that has in it either the desire or the power to emancipate us from "the tyranny of things" and to bring us into the knowledge of truth which is perfect freedom. I am not here even by way of inference pleading for the "simple life." The canting gospel of the "simple life" does not appeal to me. The true life is not simple

but highly elaborate and complex. A man's life is not the sum of his self denials but the sum of his affirmative experiences, and the more points at which he with wisdom and temperance touches and enjoys the world the more he lives. Life should be varied, copious and rich. Life is more than meat, it is more than raiment, it is more than baronial mansions, it is more than sensations of the nerves, it is more than money. And it is because every serious-minded man must rebel at every point of his being against this meager and partial interpretation of life and affirm at every point of his being the ampler and more inclusive conception of life that he should strive with burning zeal to maintain in our higher educational institutions a type of training and of culture that covers the whole man, the mind as well as the body, the soul as well as the mind.

What we need to-day is a distributive culture, a culture that is centrifugal. The external conditions of life, especially in our own country, are imperiously centripetal. Excessive competition necessitates excessive division of labour, and excessive division of labour involves excessive localization of energy. Man in his eager desire for the things that minister to the power and enjoyment of life is generation by generation bringing his talents to a focus in some branch of a profession or in some special department of art or in some extremely limited commercial interest. Personality is in danger of shrinking up into the narrow dimensions of a function under the blighting touch of our economic civilization. The general physician, the general surgeon is a thing of the past. Now, all the men of high eminence in medicine or surgery are specialists. They are heart specialists, or brain specialists, or nerve specialists, or throat specialists. And as it is in medicine so it is in law, in literature, in the art of teaching. The movement everywhere is toward minuteness of sphere and compression of faculty. Now I am aware that the wise man will not and must not quarrel with this tendency of modern civilization to localize personal energy in the matter of one's vocation. The world of science, the world of philosophy, the world of history, the world of literature, the world of art are all so vast, ranging in their immensities of fact and mystery so far beyond the reach and scope of the human mind that it be-

hooves man if he would know even a little thoroughly to limit the area of his interests and to concentrate his talents; for other things being equal the more we compress the energies of the mind the more surely we shall attain to the mastery of our sphere.

And yet while admitting the wisdom that confines the forces of each individual life to a certain well-defined groove of expression, I am sure that we all feel that the man who is only a specialist is a poor creature. The man who brings the full wealth of his manhood to his profession or his art, that man must always be admirable, but the man who sinks and merges the full wealth of his manhood in his profession or his art, that man must always be lustreless and contemptible. He misses by necessity the full meaning of life. He is a bigot in his religion, or irreligion, a martinet in the matter of conduct, a patriot of the insolent and militant type, a dull companion that makes life a thing of exhaustion and disgust for all sensitive souls compelled by an unkind fate to live in habitual touch with him.

But, if we are to be saved from the tyranny and dullness of mere specialism, we must in our university days build ourselves upon the large free lines of catholic culture. In these early days and before the world becomes for us an austere and cramping despot we must learn to think and feel in the large inclusive way; we must learn to see life steadily and to see it whole; we must learn to live as Goethe did "in the cosmic consciousness;" we must learn to look out upon the world of nature and of man with "mild and magnificent eye." And this to my mind is the great and exclusive excellence of the old ideal of education. It and it alone affords an adequate background of catholic culture, it and it alone makes for universality of mind, for totality of life, for symmetry of manhood, for a personality, comprehensive and full orb'd.

A further motive urging us to maintain allegiance to the educational traditions of the past is the fact that the academic temperament tends to social and political stability. And this is a fact of vital concern for a people so highly neurotic as we are. Our virtues, as a people, are many and admirable. We are as a nation highly intelligent, if not intellectual, sensitive, immensely cosmopolitan in our hospitality, superbly sane in critical mo-



ments and endowed with a rare genius of adjustment; and yet all who reflect deeply upon contemporary American life must be vividly conscious that we are as a nation nervous and unstable. I am not speaking of the merits of the case, but it is unquestionably true that the great mass of our citizens were driven into the war with Spain not by any deep convictions of moral obligation, not by any over-powering transcendent sentiments of humanity, but purely by the impulse of action which is so characteristic of us as a people. Our nation by inherited temperament and by the compulsive power of an abounding vitality chafes at the passive and the statical. It longs for a new experience. We demand every now and then a change of heroes, political leaders, favorite novelists, creeds and systems. We have a tremendous appetency for new fads, new social panaceas, new idols and "new gods." We dread ennui, we must have movement, experiment, change.

Some years ago our political shibboleth was fiat money, a little later it was bimetalism, now it is paternalism in government, municipal and state. And this last political fetish will not, I fear, be so easily disposed of as the two former. Those who live in the more tranquil and leisurely world of the South are not so conscious of this national nervousness as those of us who live in the very midst of the industrial problem, in the great surging and ever murmuring cities of commerce. But nothing is more certain than that the industrial masses of this nation are in a state of vague unrest and ready and anxious to move forward to some experiment in the way of economic and social reconstruction, unless the headway be checked by wise leadership.

What then is the reason of this popular passion for experiment and change? Is it increasing austerity of economic conditions? Surely not, for the generality of people have never been so comfortable as they are now. Is it the tyranny of wealth? Only the unreflecting or the demagogue would so maintain; for though here and there wealth may be occasionally arrogant and oppressive, the generality of wealth is keenly conscious of its larger obligations to society. We have, as all nations have, men with accommodating consciences in the world of high finance, but they are so conspicuous and odious only because they are so exceptional. The thing that distinguishes the rich man

of to-day from all other days is not the vice of dishonesty, but the virtue of democracy that enthroned in his conscience if not in his heart commands him to bestow his wealth upon the world with large and bountiful hand. Our age is an age of commerce, but it is also an age notable for the regal magnificence of its philanthropies. The explanation of this malady of restlessness is neither the nude circumstances of the masses on the one hand nor the tyranny of the rich on the other. It is ignorance, not an ignorance that has its origin as ignorance usually has in a deficient mentality, but a more dangerous ignorance born of limitlessness of historic vision. As a people we are intensely conscious of certain economic and political evils and we want, naturally enough, to get rid of them; but we have not in sufficient measure the counterbalancing conservative temperament, a virtue occasionally inherited but more generally acquired and that is in nearly all cases associated with the historic consciousness which tells us, if it tells us anything, that radical political change is an incessant failure and that all social amelioration is the product of slow and continuous development. It is this historic consciousness that is most to be desired in our political leaders in this country at the present time. We do not so much need men who are experts in the facts and logic of political economy, men with a sectional hobby, men who babble in exuberant rhetoric about the virtues of their party. We need men of another stamp, men of the large commanding eye, who see far and wide and deep, statesmen with the historic sense of proportion, moderation and continuity, statesmen who will teach their constituencies to think and hope and act along lines of sanity. And statesmen of this diviner mould are always the men who are large with the catholic largeness and wise with the calm and dispassionate wisdom of the academic ideal.

A final reason for the supremacy of the academic method in our higher institutions of learning is that it has a subtle affinity for amenity and grace of manners. Now manners, no doubt, are the small change in the commerce of man with man and soul with soul. They are not like the edicts of the decalogue essential to the dominativeness of a people. They are not even of the

essence of a great man's power. We may regret it, but history and biography are replete with evidences that the puissance of a people is not always allied with suavity and that commandingness of personality is not always associated with benignity and beauty of spirit. Napoleon was majestic, impassive, imperturbable, but he was not urbane. He had the talents of a celestial, the administrative faculties of a king of kings, but his manners were at times crude with the crudity of the peasant. If ever in the world of literature there lived and ruled a man of force, it was Samuel Johnson. He compelled by the virility, the massiveness, the vastness of his intellect, the homage of the great men of his day. He was a lord among the lords of letters, statesmanship and art; and yet as we behold him revealed by Boswell's consummate genius, he is, despite the herculean proportions of his intellect and the almost feminine tenderness of his sympathies, a sad philistine, a gruff and ponderous boor. If, however, personal force is sometimes compatible with crudity, a close scrutiny of the facts of life shows us that the most perfect expressions of personal force are always found defined by lines of chastity and loveliness. Life at its best must be more than powerful, it must be beautiful.

A really great nation must not only have the possessions, the wealth, the intellectual culture and the art of the civilian, it must also have the address, the manners of the civilian. It is not enough for the man of letters to write with fullness of matter and vigor of logic; if he would do full justice to his art he must write with beauty of form. The English of those masters of style, Addison, Matthew Arnold, Walter Pater, is aromatic; there is about it a delicious flavour of words, an exquisite delicacy and pertinency of phrase. The purest prose comes to us not in homespun, but in court dress. Style is a fact of central significance in letters. It is also a fact of central significance in life. Nobility of bearing, sweetness of attitude, a fine consideration of others, that indefinable charm of the exterior man named urbanity, these are the minor virtues inculcated by the prophets of the lovely and whose function it is to envelop social intercourse in a mild transmissive atmosphere, conducive to the facile and happy exchange between man and man of the commodities of

mind and heart. These lesser virtues, however lightly the hard man of commerce and of action may esteem them, are none the less a mighty factor in the joy of life. And yet herein lies, I fear, our great lack as a nation. We are brave and energetic and intelligent, but we are not a people of manners. We are too urgent, obtrusive and aggressive. We are deficient in serenity, in sweetness, in the sense of the appropriate and the opportune. A scholar of rare distinction, Dr. Charles Eliot Norton of Harvard, said some years ago that we were as a nation lacking in civility. Our *amour propre* was severely wounded by the criticism. The criticism was true then; it is true now.

For though we shall find nowhere a more complete realization of the instinct for the beautiful in conduct than among individual Americans, still even the most ardent lover of our country, if he be critical and impartial in his judgment, must admit that as a people we fall sadly short of the ultimate perfection of civilization, perfection of manners, reticence and composure of spirit, beauty of speech and of action. And this ultimate perfection of a great civilization will be our possession only in the measure that we conserve and emphasize in our educational methods the academic ideal, with its long and fine tradition of the minor virtues, with its antique notes of proportion, universality and grace.

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